

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-10 Cancelled

Claim 11 (currently amended) A method for treating a patient having a liver disease of viral origin, said disease being selected from the group consisting of chronic hepatitis C, and cirrhosis caused by hepatitis C virus; ~~marked by lower than normal levels of IFN-alpha 5,~~ said method comprising a step of administering to the patient an amount of IFN-alpha 5 or a nucleotide sequence encoding IFN-alpha 5 that is effective to raise the level of IFN-alpha 5 in the patient ~~treat the disease.~~

Claim 12 (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, wherein the liver disease is chronic hepatitis C.

Claim 13 (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, wherein the liver disease is cirrhosis of viral origin.

Claim 14 (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, wherein the liver disease is hepatocellular carcinoma.

Claim 15 (currently amended) A method according to claim 11, comprising administering to the patient a nucleotide ~~protein~~ comprising SEQ ID NO: 1 or a peptide encoded by said nucleotide.

Claim 16 (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, comprising administering to the patient a recombinant protein comprising said IFN-alpha 5.

Claim 17 (previously presented) A method according to claim 16, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in a procaryotic host organism.

Claim 18 (currently amended) A method according to claim 16, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in *E. coli*.

Claim 19 (previously presented) A method according to claim 16, wherein said recombinant protein is prepared by cloning an expression vector in a eukaryotic host organism.

Claim 20 (previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the eukaryotic host organism is *Solanum tuberosum*.

Claim 21 (currently amended) A method for treating a patient having a liver disease selected from the group consisting of chronic hepatitis C, and cirrhosis caused by hepatitis C virus, wherein the patient has a liver that produces lower than normal levels of IFN-alpha 5, said method comprising inducing synthesis of interferon alpha 5 in liver cells of the patient.

Claim 22 (previously presented) A method for screening a patient suspected of having a liver disease, said method comprising assaying liver cells of the patient for reduced levels of IFN-alpha 5.

Claim 23 to 28 (cancelled)